

Crime and Punishment



Knook

WARMINSTER

SHEEP STEALING

At the Clerk's Office, on Wednesday, the 7th inst., before N. Barton, Esq., William Dicks, labourer, of Heytesbury, was brought up in custody, charged with stealing a ewe sheep, the property of R.S. Wills, Esq., of Knook-house. It appears that on Monday, the 5th inst., the police had a suspicion that a sheep had been stolen in the neighbourhood; they at once made an active search, and about a quarter of a mile, from where the sheep was supposed to be stolen from, was an old well, about 100 feet deep, and from what they discovered, they suspected the skin to be in the bottom of the well, and with the assistance of Sergeant Millard, and two more constables, constable Jones descended the well, attached to a wagon rope, where he found the skin, head, and three of the trotters. They at once made search for the carcass, and in the prisoner's house Sergeant Millard found two legs and two shoulders of mutton secreted in a dark room. The police made circumstance known to the adjoining farmers, and R. S. Wills, Esq., identified the skin as his property. Mr Lidbury, butcher, of Warminster proved that the skin and trotters belonged to the meat. The police had the prisoner in custody and the above things, before R.S. Wills, Esq., was aware of the loss. The prisoner was fully committed for trial.

(Salisbury and Winchester Journal – Saturday 17 December, 1859)

William Dicks, a labourer, was charged with stealing a ewe sheep, the property of Mr Richard Sydenham Wills, at Knooke, on the 5th Dec. The evidence against the prisoner was, that some shoulders and legs of mutton were found secreted in a pantry in his house behind some canvas, which corresponded exactly with a sheep's skin and sheep's trotters that had been discovered in a well near Mr Wills's sheep fold. This, coupled with the fact that the prisoner, before his house was searched, had denied having any mutton in it, was considered conclusive of his guilt, and he was sentenced to 4 months' imprisonment

(Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette – Thursday 5 January, 1860)
